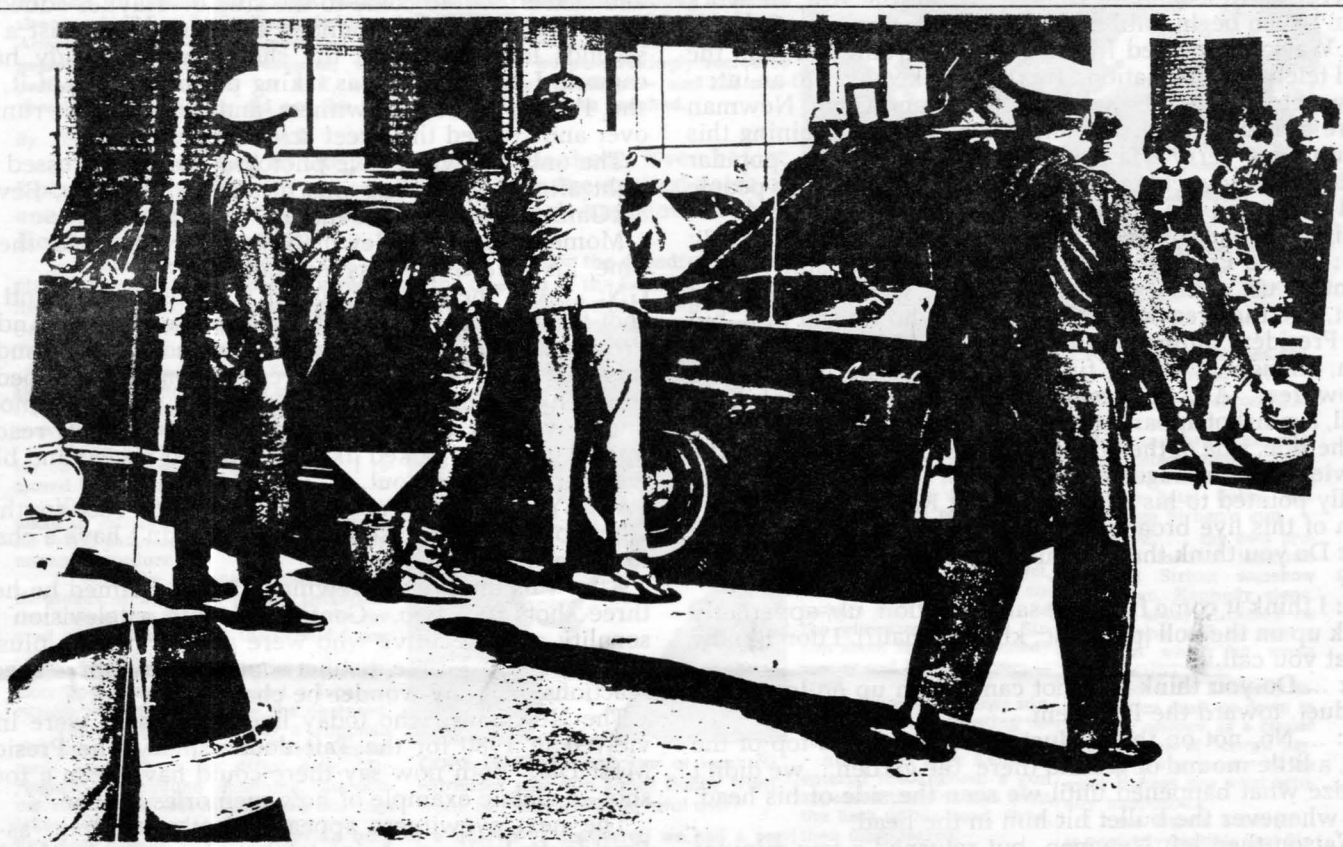
COVERUPS!

Number 14 *Gary Mack, Editor & Publisher* January, 1984



THE KENNEDY TAPES AND OTHER NEW EVIDENCE

by Gary Mack

It wasn't as good as I'd hoped, but then the anniversary wasn't nearly as bad as it could have been. New evidence did turn up, evidence that confirmed what we've long suspected but could never prove.

The Cecil Stoughton photo above, printed in the mostly useless November issue of Life, is rare confirmation that evidence was removed from the car and either destroyed or made to disappear. Stoughton, a White House still photographer, took the picture moments after the bubbletop was replaced. But Life didn't include the arrow, which points to a stainless steel bucket. The caption reads "Outside Parkland, agents clean the bloody limousine."

Were skull fragments or bullets placed in the bucket? We don't know, because the official record makes no reference to a pail with the contents of a crime scene. And as expected, Life ran the picture with no comment.

Other magazines and newspapers had special reports and supplements for the twentieth anniversary, some of which included new or first-time interviews with significant witnesses and principals. This and subsequent issues will include many of those stories.

But the most fascinating anniversary special was provided by WFAA-TV, the local ABC affiliate. After numerous requests over the years for access to their videotapes, WFAA aired nearly 16 hours of it's original news coverage. They ran the weekend prior to the anniversary in the late night hours between midnight and 7 early Saturday and Sunday mornings with a two hour wrapup early Monday morning. Except for the commercial breaks, which were few, and occasional on-camera commentary by news anchor Tracy Rowlett, it was 1963 all over again.

The station had been lucky—it had just received a shipment of videotape and had nearly 40 hours available (at a cost of about $10,000). The ABC network, at that time, was a distant third with both people and equipment, so WFAA was forced to originate far more local cut-ins than the other network affiliates; in fact, ABC taped none of its coverage! So the over-30 hours kept by WFAA is all that remains of that weekend (newsfilm shot by ABC photographers is still available).

For this presentation titled "The Kennedy Tapes," WFAA did a straight chronology with narration to bridge the periods not recorded. Fortunately, the station had a complete index, cross-referenced, that it had prepared for the Warren Commission. Despite the fact that the original reels and index had never been marked for proper sequence, I noted only two minor errors.

Locally, WFAA was not the news leader it is today. But from the perspective of 20 years, its coverage was excellent and, in some cases, unique. By using two video recorders I was able to tape every minute of interest and then prepare a transcript.

Lee Harvey Oswald was seen on camera many times, but only twice was his voice recorded. On Saturday, as he was led down the hallway away from the camera he's heard saying "....the basic fundamental hygienic rights, I mean,

like a shower and, uh, clothing." The reporter, Paul Goode, explained that Oswald was saying he was being denied those rights.

Some time later, as Oswald was being led back to the room he had come from, he said "I don't know what dispatches you people have been given, but I emphatically deny these charges. I have not killed anybody, I have not committed any acts of violence." The last sentence was literally shouted from inside the room and ended only when the door slammed shut. Oswald was furious.

WFAA's first bulletin came at 12:45 (the ABC network didn't even begin until early afternoon). Program Director Jay Watson appeared from behind a curtain and read the UPI teletype information. He then walked over to an interview set in the studio where William and Gayle Newman were already seated with their two children. Joining this group was Jerry Haynes, then and now the popular children's show character Mr. Peppermint. All six people had witnessed the assassination!

Bill Newman (BN) was interviewed first by Watson (JW):
BN: ....The President's car was some 50 feet still, yet, in front of us, comin' towards us when we heard the first shot, and the President, I don't know who was hit first, but the President jumped up in his seat, and I thought it scared him, thought it was a firecracker cause he looked, you know, fear. And then as the car got directly in front of us, well, a gunshot apparently from behind us hit the President in the side, side of the temple. (This sequence is seen in the movie Rush To Judgement as a mirror image. Newman actually pointed to his left temple, but Rush's source, a UPI film of this live broadcast, is reversed.)
JW: Do you think the first gunshot came from behind you, too?
BN: I think it come from the same location, uh, apparently back up on the noll (phonetic, knoll or mall?), I don't know what you call it.
JW: ....Do you think the shot came from up on top of the viaduct, toward the President....?
BN: ....No, not on the viaduct itself, but up on top of the hill, a little mound of ground there, the garden....we didn't realize what happened until we seen the side of his head, uh, whenever the bullet hit him in the head.

Watson then left Newman, but returned a few minutes later:
JW: Did you say that one of the shots came from one direction and one from another, it seemed like?
BN: No sir. Actually I felt they both come from directly behind where we were standing. The President, it looked like he was looking in that direction. I don't know whether he was hit first, apparently he was and it looked like he jumped up in his seat, and when he jumped up, well, he was shot directly in the head. And, I don't know what you call the noll behind us, but apparently that's where
JW: He was.
BN: Right.

Newman could not have been more explicit. The shots came from behind him while he was looking at JFK. And Kennedy was looking at that same location, a fact verified in Zapruder frames beginning around Z-170. Despite his Texas accent and not knowing the best word for the location , Newman made it clear that he was not talking about the area to his left front, the TSBD.

Again the interview was interrupted, but Newman appeared on camera once more just a few moments later:
JW: And the shots were almost simultaneously, weren't they?
BN: Yes sir, they were probably 10 seconds apart.
JW: Do you know who fired the third shot?
BN: I didn't hear a third, I don't recall a third shot, there may have been....I don't recall a third shot. I just couldn't, I'm not certain of that. I do know that I heard two shots.
JW: Yeah I heard three, I know that.
BN: You heard three? Well...

Actually, Watson and Haynes had repeated several times, in Newman's presence, that they had heard 3 shots. Watson implied the first two were closer together than the last two, but neither speculated on a source. He later said two shots could sound like one if they were fired close together. Watson and Haynes were on the west side of Houston between the reflecting pool and the monument. They had turned to walk south back to the station when the shots were fired. Neither saw JFK during the shooting. They both ran across Elm and up the hill with everyone else and, when no one was found, spotted the Newman's and asked them to come to the studio. Haynes added:
JH: ....and then they rounded the corner and just a few seconds later we heard the shots....and the lady had a camera, I remember, was taking personal films of it, and she, I think, was an eyewitness, and she had come running over and crossed the street screaming.

The only known female photographer who crossed Elm right after the shooting was the Babushka Lady, Beverly McGann. Her film conveniently "disappeared."

Moments after Bill Newman was interviewed for the last time, his wife Gayle was questioned:
GN: ....And the car was just up a piece from us and this shot fired out and I thought it was a firecracker. And the President kinda raised up in his seat and....all of a sudden this next one popped and Governor Connally grabbed his stomach and kinda laid over to the side. And then another one, it was just all so fast, and President Kennedy reached up and grabbed, looked like his, grabbed his ear and blood just started gushing out....
JW: ....You didn't see anybody, or you didn't see anything?
GN: No, it happened so fast that you didn't have a chance to, to see anything....

After this interview, Newman always claimed he heard three shots, not two. Confronted with a television personality and executive who were also witnesses, plus his wife who heard three distinct shots and saw three specific reactions, is it any wonder he changed his story?

The Newmans, who today live in Indiana, were interviewed in 1980 for the Taft documentary The President Must Die. Both now say there could have been a fourth shot—a classic example of how memories change.

The next eyewitness appeared just after 2pm, as the President's body was being taken to Love Field. Abraham Zapruder (AZ) was soon told where the shots came from:
AZ: ....as the President was coming down from Houston Street making his turn, it was about a halfway down there, I heard a shot, and he slumped to the side like this. Then I heard another shot or two, I couldn't say whether it was one or two, and I saw his head practically open up....
JW: ....You have the film in your camera? We'll try to
AZ: Yes I brought it to the studio.
JW: We'll try to get that processed and have it as soon as possible....Now we have a picture of the building....there is the window where the gun was allegedly fired from that killed President Kennedy.
AZ: ....I must have been in the line of fire where I see in that picture where it was, I was right on that concrete block....

Watson was given new information while Zapruder was talking, information that came from a wire service or one of WFAA's own news people. At any rate, Zapruder seemed confused and surprised to learn that the shots had come from the TSBD to his left. No wonder his later statements and interviews seemed vague and rambling. Was his initial opinion significantly different?

WFAA was, indeed, the first stop in the attempt to get the film developed. But stations in 1963 only handled 16mm black & white film, not 8mm color. Imagine, though, what could have happened. WFAA might have shown the film that afternoon, not suppressed it as Life magazine did a few days later. History would have been very different.

Coming in future issues, more eyewitness interviews from The Kennedy Tapes, including the only different John Connally description of the assassination.

Only in The Enquirer — Bombshell Book by the Coroner to the Stars

Who Really Fired the Shot That Killed Bobby Kennedy?

CLUTCHING ROSARY: Sen. Robert Kennedy lies on floor dying after he was shot by Sirhan Sirhan.

At least 70 people saw Sirhan Sirhan shoot and kill Sen. Bobby Kennedy in Los Angeles in 1968 — but former Los Angeles Coroner Thomas Noguchi, who performed the autopsy on RFK, says there's evidence Sirhan did not fire the fatal shot. In this astonishing exclusive ENQUIRER installment from his blockbuster new book, "Coroner," Noguchi reveals how he painstakingly recreated the Kennedy shooting — and the startling conclusion he reached.

By THOMAS NOGUCHI, M.D.

I was awakened by the jangle of the telephone. Even before I placed the receiver to my ear, I could hear the excited voice of one of my deputies: "Dr. Noguchi, something's happened. Bobby Kennedy has been shot!"

I immediately turned on the television set and saw the dreadful film replay of the shooting — people screaming, the close-up of the Senator's face as he lay on the floor of a Los Angeles hotel kitchen. I heard a paramedic say the Senator had been shot in the head. Twenty-four hours later he was dead.

COPS SEIZE Sirhan after at least 70 witnesses saw him shoot Bobby from front. But did he fire the fatal shot?

At least 70 people saw Sen. Kennedy shot — but my autopsy would appear to contradict what every single witness had seen with his own eyes in that crowded kitchen.

At the autopsy, Sen. Kennedy's body lay on a table covered with a sheet. I removed the bandages on his head.

My emotions at that moment led me to make an extraordinary request, surprising my fellow pathologists, who knew it was not normal procedure.

It would be the only instance in the thousands of autopsies I have performed that I asked that the deceased's face be covered with a towel. Only then could I perform my work professionally, unshaken by my feelings for Kennedy. And I observed a moment of silence, head bowed, a Japanese custom showing respect for the deceased.

The day after the autopsy, a criminologist from the Los Angeles Police Department appeared at my office door. "Dr. Noguchi, we've found something. Gun powder residue and soot in some hair shavings taken from around Kennedy's head wound."

"Soot?" I sat straight up. Only that morning, the police had informed me that all the witnesses to the assassination had reported that Sirhan Sirhan had been at least a yard away when he fired at Kennedy. But if there was soot in the scalp hair, that meant a gun had been triggered within inches of his head.

I decided a ballistics test would be necessary to determine the precise distance. That afternoon, a lab technician was startled by my request for "seven pigs' ears."

I then asked him to affix the pigs' ears to padded muslin configurations, each simulating a skull. We would then take the "skulls" to the police academy's shooting range for a unique ballistics test which I would supervise.

I asked an officer to fire at each "skull," beginning with a firm contact shot, then moving back to a quarter-inch, half-inch, two, three and four inches.

Crack! Crack! Crack! The marksman moved down the line, carefully, until he had completed seven shots. At three inches from the skull, I discovered we had a perfect match of the pattern of unburned gunpowder grains I had found on Kennedy's right ear.

I now knew the precise location of the murder weapon at the moment it was fired: only three inches behind the head.

But I also realized that this evidence seemed to exonerate Sirhan Sirhan.

Not a single witness had seen him fire behind Kennedy's ear at point-blank range.

What was the truth? First, what did the eyes of the onlookers see? Almost all of the witnesses observed Sirhan shoot and kill Kennedy openly and brazenly from in front.

But forensic evidence suggested that the shooting occurred in a different way.

An instant after Kennedy entered the kitchen, a gun appeared three inches from the back of his head, fired, then disappeared.

Sirhan's conviction was upheld.

But scientific evidence of soot and a host of witnesses who did not actually see Sirhan fire the fatal shot — all seemed to indicate there may have been a second gunman.

Moreover, even the most sophisticated forensic techniques were unable to prove that the fatal bullet was fired from Sirhan's gun.

And yet . . . my own professional instinct instructs me that Sirhan somehow killed Sen. Kennedy alone. He has always insisted he acted alone, and he kept a diary in which he wrote "RFK MUST DIE."

I believe the Kennedy assassination must go down in forensic science as a classic phenomenon of "crowd psychology," where none of the eyewitnesses saw what actually happened.

I have always believed it is perfectly possible that Sirhan lunged toward Kennedy and fired, a move unseen by everyone, and then, as Kennedy spun around, lunged back to fire from farther away, a second move also invisible to all.

Or a second gunman triggered the first shot up close, ducked away, and then Sirhan fired the other bullets from three feet away as Kennedy turned.

Thus I have never said that Sirhan Sirhan killed Robert Kennedy.

Perhaps the whole truth will never be known.

MINUTES BEFORE SHOOTING: Bobby's last hurrah in Presidential campaign.

Next Week: The Truth Behind William Holden's Strange Death

From CORONER by Thomas Noguchi, M.D. with Joseph DiMona. Copyright © 1983 by Thomas Noguchi, M.D. and Joseph DiMona. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

DMN 12-23-83

Elsewhere

BRENNAN, Howard L., 64, of Kemp, Kaufman County, author of *Eyewitness To The Kennedy Assassination* and retired Katy Railroad steamfitter. Services 11 a.m. Saturday, Anderson-Clayton Bros. Funeral Chapel, Kemp.

(Brennan, who was farsighted and wasn't wearing his glasses, was the only witness who claimed to have seen a gunman; but he told conflicting stories because he was afraid there was a conspiracy. He and Charles Brehm were seen in The Kennedy Tapes being led over to the Sheriff's office. Does anyone have a copy of Brennan's manuscript?)

1983 FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM ■ SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1983

LBJ said Robert Kennedy blocked Oval Office

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — In the days after President John F. Kennedy's assassination, his brother, Robert, refused to let Lyndon Johnson use the Oval Office, a historian reported Friday.

Johnson, who discussed the matter in a 1969 interview, believed that it was a plan to keep him from acting as chief executive, said Francis Loewenheim, a historian and professor of history at Rice University writing in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*.

The article does not say how Robert Kennedy, then attorney general, could have kept Johnson from acting as president or offer evidence that that was his plan. Nor did it say what actions Kennedy took to keep his brother's successor out of the Oval Office.

In an oral history interview now available at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library at the University of Texas at Austin, Johnson also said Kennedy later tried to persuade him to fire Secretary of State Dean Rusk and replace him with Johnson aide Bill Moyers, now a commentator with CBS.

The newly discovered interview with Johnson was conducted at the LBJ Ranch, eight months after he left office, by former *New York Times* reporter and State Department official William J. Jorden.

Loewenheim wrote that for Robert Kennedy, Johnson's succession to office was another nightmare added to the horror of losing his brother in the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination.

Kennedy, who reportedly disliked Johnson, was further angered when he learned that Johnson told secretaries to have the Oval Office ready for his use by midmorning Nov. 23, Loewenheim said.

Johnson said he thought Kennedy "seriously considered whether he would let me be president; whether he should really take the position the vice president didn't automatically move in. I thought that was on his mind every time I saw him the first few days, after I had already taken the oath."

"I think," Johnson went on, "he was seriously calculating what steps to take. For several days he really kept me out of the president's office. I operated from (the vice president's office in) the Executive Office Building because it (the president's office) was not made available to me. It was quite a problem."

In early 1964, Kennedy told an interviewer, "Four or five matters . . . arose during the period of Nov. 22 to Nov. 27 which made me bitterer . . . with Lyndon Johnson." Kennedy did not elaborate, Loewenheim said.

In the same interview, Johnson said Kennedy suggested several times in 1963 and 1964 that Johnson dismiss Rusk, John Kennedy's appointee, and replace him with Moyers. Kennedy said his brother had planned to replace him.

Johnson rejected Kennedy's advice, and Rusk continued as secretary of state until the end of the Johnson administration in January 1969.

Johnson said Kennedy's "whole life was dedicated to removing Rusk, and electing himself president."

Robert Kennedy was assassinated in June 1968 while campaigning in California for the Democratic nomination for president. Johnson died in January 1973.

FWST 11-4-83

Idea of US spy museum is coming in from cold

WASHINGTON (AP) — What was once marked "Top Secret" might someday be on display for the world to see in an intelligence museum.

America's intelligence alumni are pushing for a corner of a floor in a Smithsonian Institution building or another museum where visitors would learn there's more to intelligence gathering than hidden microphones and dirty tricks.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence heard testimony Thursday which clarified what sorts of secrets are old enough or sufficiently well-known to display.

Documents, books, photos of and by spies and counterfeit postage stamps used to get messages past enemy lines all were suggested as exhibits.

It is conceived that a visitor could see gadgets of all kinds, an enlarged microdot, secret inks, concealment devices, codes and ciphers.

The ideas are in place. The place isn't. Supporters of the idea admitted they had neither the money nor the space for their exhibits.

MIAMI HERALD 8-2-83

Fear of Mafia and future led Aleman to fatal finale

By HELGA SILVA
Herald Staff Writer

Penniless, depressed and convinced the Mafia was out to kill him, Jose Braulio Aleman, heir to a Cuban fortune, committed suicide in a final rampage that left a trail of death and blood among those he loved most.

The story Monday from the few friends Aleman confided in was of a man who had lost his money, his land holdings and his mental health.

The only son of the late Jose Manuel Aleman, a pre-Batista Cuban minister of education — whose career and fortune were clouded by charges of graft and corruption — was afraid of being killed by the Mafia. He believed his 1978 Congressional testimony against underworld figure Santo Trafficante had marked him for life.

"He trusted very few people. He was convinced the Mafia was after him," said Eugenio Martinez, recently pardoned Watergate burglar, a close friend.

"In the last four or five years he had become almost a recluse because he was convinced the Mafia was going to retaliate against him because of his testimony," said Martinez, who had gotten Aleman his last job: car salesman at Anthony Abraham Chevrolet. Aleman lasted three weeks.

Aleman had seen his share of the family fortune — once estimated between $29 million and $200 million — dwindle away in efforts to fight former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista and later Fidel Castro. Unable to meet mortgage payments, property taxes and upkeep, he had sold, one by one, land holdings that at one time included the Miami stadium, hotels and what is now Cape Florida in Key Biscayne.

Three months ago, unable to pay the rent on his apartment, he moved in with his mother, into the one-story bungalow the family had lived in for 17 years in a predominantly Latin neighborhood in central Miami.

Sunday morning, what was left of Jose Braulio Aleman's real world exploded into an uncontrollable rage directed against his family. In two hours Aleman took his own life and that of an elderly relative, and wounded three other relatives, including his six-year-old cousin.

Ironically, Monday he was to have set up yet another appointment with a psychiatrist. Aleman had cancelled four previous appointments.

Instead, Aleman's body lay at Caballero Funeral Home in Coral Gables Monday.

Laid next to him was his 69-year-old aunt, Maria Candarez. He shot her at close range twice — once in the neck, the other in the head. She died instantly.

Both will be buried today at Miami Memorial Park, 1661 SW 37 Ave. Funeral services are scheduled at 3 p.m.

Aleman killed her with the same semi-automatic 9mm handgun he turned on himself before Miami police SWAT officers got to him, according to the autopsy released Monday by the Dade Medical Examiner.

"He just went crazy," said Juan Herrero Camejo, a former bodyguard of the dead man's father and a neighbor of the family. "He tore up the house in a rage," said Herrero Camejo, who helped clean up the house Monday.

"There was so much blood on the floor . . . everything was in shambles," he said. Herrero Camejo had seen Aleman grow from boyhood to adulthood and witnessed his final deterioration.

"There is no doubt in my mind he lost his mind . . . . It was too much for him — seeing himself with no means, no future, no friends and alone with his fears," said Herrero Camejo, one of the few people Aleman seemed to trust.

His fear stemmed from his Sept. 19, 1978, testimony before the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations. Aleman said Trafficante had told him that President John Kennedy would not be reelected, that he was going to get hit.

Trafficante, testifying the following day, denied the charge.

From that day on, Aleman believed he was on a Mafia hit list.

"He was studious by nature and liked solitude," said Martinez. "His fear pushed him into withdrawal from social life."

The fear became obsessive.

Friends said Aleman turned down a job as a traveling salesman because he believed the Mafia would take the opportunity to set him up under the guise of business deal.

Living became unbearable.

Sunday, the neighborhood where Aleman lived with his mother awoke to cries and shots. Police arrived at 7:18 a.m., and were met by the three wounded relatives who had bolted from the house.

Aleman fired twice during the two hours he held the Miami SWAT team at bay. When a pair of officers finally stormed the house, believing Aleman's aunt was still alive, they found her dead.

Moments later, they found Aleman and shot him. Hours later they learned their bullets did not kill him.

Dr. Charles Wetli, acting Dade medical examiner, said Aleman shot himself in the right temple an instant before he was hit by the police bullets. Aleman died from his own 9mm slug, Wetli said.

Until the autopsy results were disclosed, it was believed Aleman had been killed by the SWAT officer's shots to his stomach.

"[Aleman] had fired shots at police, they fired back and missed the first time. He ran to a bedroom and shot himself in the right temple . . . ," Wetli said. "He died almost instantly."

Miami Police Sgt. Jack Sullivan said police fired because they saw the hand holding the gun moving.

There were no traces of alcohol in Aleman's blood, Wetli said.

Wounded were Sofia Ampudia, Aleman's 74-year old aunt who was shot in the hands; cousin Maria Gonzalez, 36, shot in the neck; and her daughter Carina, 6, shot in the face.

Ampudia and Gonzalez were listed in fair condition Monday at Jackson Memorial Hospital. Carina was listed in good condition.

Aleman's mother, Silvia Candarez, was taken to Jackson Memorial Hospital's crisis intervention center Sunday night. The next day, she asked neighbors to bring her mourning clothes so she could to attend the wake for her son and sister.

FWST 12-5-83

COVER-UP: "Late last year, I saw part of an interview on an Austin cable channel with Gary Shaw, author of a book called *Coverup*. It was about the assassination of Kennedy. I have not been able to find this book anywhere and only one bookstore manager had even heard about it. I thought maybe the book itself became part of the 'cover-up' since it didn't show up now during the 20th anniversary period. Can you tell me what has happened to this book?"—P.L.S.

BRICE: Shaw reports that he could find no publisher for his book so he bore the costs of publication in 1976. You can order a copy of the book directly from him at P.O. Box 722, Cleburne 76031. The cost is $12, which includes postage and handling charges.

FWST 12-16-83

Few sign Reagan censorship plan

New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — In March, expressing "grave concern" about disclosure of government secrets, President Reagan signed an order requiring more than 128,000 government employees to agree to lifelong censorship.

But administration officials acknowledge that not one top Reagan official, and only a handful of people in lower ranks, have yet signed the agreement, which was issued in August.

The officials said the process was slowed not only by ordinary bureaucratic delays but also by a need to move cautiously in light of criticism of the agreement, which prompted Congress to put a moratorium on its use effective Nov. 22.

Other officials, however, said that the censorship program was widely resisted inside the government and noted that top officials had not hastened to sign the agreement themselves before Congress acted.

A senior official hinted strongly that the administration might be willing to narrow the category of information that would have to be submitted by former officials to government censors or otherwise alter the censorship program, in order to reach a compromise. His statement came in response to a question from a reporter about how the administration planned to respond to the strong congressional opposition to the censorship program.

Not one White House, Defense or Treasury official has signed the administration's sweeping new censorship agreement, official spokesmen said. Reagan himself, as an elected official, is permanently exempted from signing, along with Vice President George Bush, and Reagan has not volunteered to sign.

Officials of the State, Justice and Energy departments said they knew of no high-ranking official and only a few of lower rank who had signed the expanded censorship agreement.

On March 11 Reagan ordered that more than 120,000 government employees who handle certain materials involving intelligence sources and methods be required to sign agreements providing for "prepublication review" of their writing by official censors to be sure government secrets are deleted. The order also provided vastly expanded tests by polygraph, or lie detector, in investigating such disclosures.

Reagan has said such steps are urgently needed to deal with a serious problem of unauthorized disclosures of national security secrets. While virtually all modern presidents have complained about "leaks," this administration's remedies were the most stringent yet proposed.

(Warren Commission members search for Texas School Book Depository)

(Reporter Hugh Aynesworth, who acted as an FBI informant before and during the Garrison investigation (see Coverups #4 for his written admission), was never questioned by the Warren Commission or investigators about what he saw that day - this is his only narrative of what he did)

Assassination IN DALLAS

A veteran journalist looks back on the day the president died

by Hugh Aynesworth

WASHINGTON POST 11-20-83

A POLL ON THE JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

Q. Do you happen to know who Lee Harvey Oswald was?

ASSASSINATED PRESIDENT KENNEDY/ACCUSED OF IT	81%
ALL OTHER ANSWERS	7
DON'T KNOW	12

Q. Do you feel that Lee Harvey Oswald was or was not the man who shot Kennedy?

WAS MAN WHO SHOT KENNEDY	61%
WAS **NOT** MAN WHO SHOT KENNEDY	17
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	22

Q. From what you know about the Kennedy assassination, do you think the important facts about the assassination have been reported or do you think there are still important unanswered questions about the assassination?

IMPORTANT FACTS ARE KNOWN	18%
STILL UNANSWERED QUESTIONS	76
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	6

Q. Do you feel the Kennedy assassination was the work of one man or was it part of a broader plot?

ONE MAN	13%
MORE THAN ONE MAN	80
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	7

Q. Do you think the U.S. government should do a large scale investigation of the Kennedy assassination or don't you think that is necessary?

SHOULD DO IT	29%
NOT NECESSARY	69
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	2

Figures are from a Washington Post-ABC News nationwide telephone poll of 1,505 adult Americans. It was conducted Nov. 3 to Nov. 7, 1983.

Hugh Aynesworth is the only reporter to witness not only the Kennedy assassination, but also Oswald's capture and murder. Aynesworth covered all aspects of the Kennedy assassination for *The Dallas Morning News* and *Newsweek* and has written about the subject for newspapers from all over the world. He also has been a consultant to the three major TV networks and has appeared on more than 75 talk shows and documentaries about the case. He now lives in Dallas and is a free-lance investigative reporter.

November 22, 1963; Fort Worth, Texas.

John F. Kennedy awakens in suite 850 of the Texas Hotel, summons aide Kenny O'Donnell and asks him to order breakfast while he showers and shaves. Two eggs, boiled exactly five minutes, orange juice, toast, marmalade and a large pot of coffee.

Jackie Kennedy is still asleep in an adjoining room when O'Donnell makes a quick newspaper run, bringing back papers from Houston, San Antonio, Dallas and Fort Worth. The president is clearly pleased at the papers' coverage of the

D Magazine

November 1983

previous day's stops in Houston and San Antonio. Warm, responsive crowds had buoyed the spirits of the entire Kennedy party, particularly Jack and Jackie, who had been anticipating this foray into Texas.

Then Kennedy sees a full-page ad in *The Dallas Morning News*. It has a black mourning border and the headline "Welcome Mr. Kennedy to Dallas"; it's signed by The American Fact-Finding Committee. The ad poses 12 questions to the president, each tinged with an archconservative slant.

Jackie hears the waiter bring in breakfast and walks, yawning, into the president's room. Jack folds the paper with the troublesome ad on top and tosses it to her. "We're really in nut country now!" He shakes his head. "How can people write such things?"

Kennedy hasn't even seen the leaflets that were distributed around town the previous few days—fliers similar to FBI "Wanted" posters, complete with frontal and side photos of Kennedy with the caption "Wanted For Treason" written at the top. The newspaper ad pales in comparison to the leaflets: They accuse the president of betraying the Constitution, turning the government over to the Communists and lying to the American people.

Kennedy's day will begin shortly with a speech in the large parking area adjacent to the hotel. From there, he'll move on to a Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce breakfast and then to Dallas, where he'll ride in a lengthy motorcade through downtown, up Stemmons Freeway to the Trade Mart for a luncheon. Here he'll deliver a major address—a speech designed to mollify critics of the New Frontier policies and help heal the political rifts between the right and left in Texas, which is a "must" if Kennedy expects to be re-elected in 1964.

It's raining, softly but steadily, and has been for much of the morning. In Dallas, the weather has cleared somewhat. But there's at least a chance that the motorcade will have to proceed in the rain.

Secret Service Agent Roy Kellerman tells Kennedy and O'Donnell that agents in Dallas want to know if they should install the bubble-top on the president's limousine. Both Kennedy and his aide snap, "No." The entourage steps out into the hall, en route to the burgeoning crowd downstairs.

November 22, 1963; Irving, Texas

Lee Harvey Oswald, a lean, rather uncommunicative man, rises early at a small bungalow at 2515 Fifth Street. He fixes himself a cup of instant coffee and dresses hurriedly before slipping into the garage, where he pulls a cheap Italian rifle from the folds of an old blanket, then conceals it in plain wrapping paper.

Back in the bedroom, he quietly pulls off his wedding ring and places it in a Russian cup. He stuffs $170 into a black wallet that his wife keeps in a drawer.

Oswald lets himself out of the tiny house and trudges half a block to Wesley Frazier's house to hop a ride to Dallas.

I'm sitting in the *Dallas Morning News* cafeteria, sipping coffee and talking about the presidential visit. Bob Gooding, a Channel 8 anchorman, and James Hood of the *News* are with me. We talk about how everybody else seems to be madly involved in the preparations and how he and I don't have much to do but relax and watch.

I tell Gooding that I hope there won't be any embarrassment. I had spent the previous day trying to find out who had circulated the "Wanted for Treason" leaflets. I mention an ugly scene that had occurred a month earlier in which U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson was harassed. I'm afraid that current feelings in Dallas have escalated to a pitch at which radicals may try to prove a point before the national media.

Several reporters and photographers stop by our table. It's about 11:30 a.m., an hour before Kennedy will drive through downtown. I'm beginning to feel left out. For the previous three years, I had been fortunate enough to have one of the hottest beats on the newspaper: science, aviation and aerospace. I had covered several U.S. manned space flights; I had been to Cuba, Europe, Mexico and elsewhere; I'd flown many of the current military and commercial aircraft and had tested weaponry. At this point, the *Morning News* is one of only a few U.S. newspapers that covers such activities. But today, I feel left out. The more I talk with the other reporters, the more I wish I had been given an assignment downtown. It's hard to stay out of the action. I'm reminded that I have a 2 p.m. interview with a scientist at SMU. I have to think hard to even recall the man's name.

Shortly after 11:30, I spot a familiar face at the cashier's station, a chubby little man dressed in black with an atrocious red-and-white tie. He's carrying an overcoat over one arm and is carrying a tray with eggs, toast and coffee. An advertising salesman nearby shouts "Good morning" to him.

I turn to Gooding and say, "There's that smart-ass, Jack Ruby. I guess he's up here trying to get Tony Zoppi to put his name in the paper again."

I can't think of five people I have ever disliked intensely, but Jack Ruby is one. I have seen him beat up drunks in his clubs; I've seen him try to impress young, naive women with a roll of $1 bills, covered by one $100 bill. I've even reported him to the police for cutting a wino's head open on Commerce Street, just across from the Adolphus Hotel. The wino had tried to bum a quarter.

Ruby *has* come to the *News* to see Zoppi, but the entertainment columnist has gone to New Orleans for a few days.

I decide to watch the president drive by. I can still make it to SMU by 2 o'clock. I turn and look at Ruby one more time, who feigns reading the paper as he tries to gaze up the switchboard operator's dress at the next table.

WITHIN HOURS of that moment, Kennedy, Oswald, Ruby and I became victims of fate. Although the three of them are long since dead, I have been unable to extricate myself from their presence in Dallas that day. Within the hour, I saw Kennedy shot. I was in the Texas Theater when Oswald was captured, and, two days later, I saw him gunned down by Ruby.

Although I wasn't on the scene when Ruby died 38 months later, I did ride to the funeral home with his family.

That's a strange sequence of events for a reporter who wasn't supposed to be there...

THERE WAS an air of anticipation in Dallas that day. I don't recall anyone expressing any serious concerns about Kennedy's safety, but some expected embarrassment from the lunatic fringe, which seemed to have found a home here.

The previous day, I had received a call from a Grand Prairie group that protested being questioned by Dallas police after publicly stating that it planned to picket the president's entourage at the Trade Mart. The Dallas police had visited several well-known far-right groups during the days before the presidential visit. They were told that freedom of speech was *one* thing, but that any embarrassing display similar to the one that Adlai Stevenson had endured in late October would be met with firm force. The message was clear: Better stay home and watch the procession on TV.

The members of the Grand Prairie group (six or eight die-hards) insisted that they would show up anyway, that they had a right to protest. Emotions were running so high that I thought the group might stir up something. I suggested to City Editor John King that I write a story about their plans, explaining what they wanted to prove. King snapped, "Hell, no. To do that would bring out another 50 crazies. Let's just ignore 'em."

When I dropped by the photo department to see who would be going to SMU with me to shoot a picture of the person I was to interview, I saw staff photographers Jack Beers and Joe Laird heading out to photograph the crowd. I decided to walk up to the police station to visit longtime police reporter Jim Ewell. I wanted to know whether the police were onto anything else with the extremist groups. I had this funny feeling...

Ewell wasn't in the police press room, so I wandered back down the streets. The crowd was growing. Many people were carrying transistor radios, listening to coverage of Kennedy's arrival. The throngs along Main Street were already two- and three-deep.

Kennedy's motorcade wasn't due to arrive for a few minutes. As I headed west, I stopped several times to speak with people I recognized. I guess it isn't every day that you get to see the president, but the crowd's excitement seemed more intense than I had expected. There were more buildings along the route back then, and in almost every window, two or three people watched the scene below.

As I approached Houston Street, I saw several fellow *News* employees and some county employees I knew. The Kennedy entourage had left Love Field, the radios blared. I decided to swing around Houston Street and head for the intersection at Elm. The motorcade would have to make a rigid left turn there, and I knew the cars and buses would have to slow down. I wanted to get a close look at the Connallys and Kennedys and my buddies on the press bus.

There seemed to be plenty of police around, barking orders to each other. Near the intersection of Houston and Elm, I chatted with an assistant district attorney I had known for several years. He was always interested in hearing about the manned space program and the astronauts; I told him how chaotic the covering of the launches at Cape Canaveral had been. I didn't really know what chaotic meant yet.

I could hear the clapping and cheering on Main Street before the motorcade turned onto Houston. It was 12:29. Here they came—gliding along, maybe 10 to 12 mph. Two teenagers jumped in front of me, jostling each other in their excitement. I moved a few feet closer to the intersection to get a better view.

To my left stood a large woman holding a small child in her arms. A woman standing beside her squealed, "Hey, look! She's got *your* dress on," referring to the pink suit that Jackie Kennedy was wearing. It was the same color, but it was at least 10 sizes smaller.

As the presidential car drove by, Gov. Connally and his wife, Nellie, radiated pride. They too had been anxious about Kennedy's visit, but it appeared that, so far, everything was going beautifully. Both Connally and Kennedy seemed to notice the huge woman waving frantically with one arm, the small child dangling from the other. (Nellie Connally later testified that she had just said, "Well, Mr. President, you can't say there aren't some people in Dallas who love you!")

The rest of the motorcade passed by. I could see Sen. Ralph Yarborough sitting to the left of Vice President Johnson and Lady Bird. He had a frozen smile on his face, but he didn't really look like he was having much fun.

Then it hit.

A pop, like the backfire of a police motorcycle. A nearby cop was tensed. A few seconds later, there was a second pop, then a third. Gunfire! "Hey! Hey!" a big man in a cowboy hat shouted, as though he could stop whatever was happening by being assertive. Two or three cops stopped short, then ran in different directions. A motorcycle policeman veered to his right. People started yelling and running. The woman in the pink dress turned, clutched her stomach and threw up on the street. A man holding a small boy threw him down on the sidewalk, shielding the child with his body. Some people clung to each other. Some ran.

It happened so fast. People pointed at the Texas School Book Depository building and the Tex-Mart building across Houston Street. I couldn't see much of the president's car. It had dipped down and was headed southwest on Elm Street. The rest of the caravan sped up a bit. People were crying and screaming.

"The president's been hit," one man cried. "Oh my God, the president's been hit." "I think Lyndon Johnson was hit, too," another said.

It's hard to recall the next few minutes. I remember running over to the front of the Depository building and listening to people there tell how they had seen the president shot. I looked at the triple overpass and saw three or four people running along the tracks. *That's* where the shots must have come from, I thought. About that time, several policemen ran into the Depository building. I tried to follow but was stopped by a menacing cop with hands like hams. As he blocked me, a WFAA newsman ran inside.

Somebody said that a Secret Service man had been hit off to the west side of the building. Five or six of us ran in that direction. We didn't find a thing.

I didn't have a notebook with me, but I had some envelopes and started making notes on them. Jim Underwood, a KRLD newsman, was interviewing a man who kept pointing up to the top of the Depository building. I quickly nosed in. The guy said his name was Howard Brennan and that he had seen the assassin.

Brennan said that he had seen the man *before* the motorcade arrived. Brennan had scoured the windows of the TSBD from directly across the street. At that time, he said, he hadn't seen a gun. Later, when he heard what he thought was a firecracker exploding, he looked back up to the sixth-floor window and saw the man aim, fire, then hesitate a few seconds—as if to see whether his shot had hit its mark.

A cop asked Brennan a few questions, then took him away to a car parked near the Depository building. Brennan described the assailant as being about 5-foot-10, in his late 20s or early 30s, thin with a khaki-colored shirt, about 160 to 165 pounds. (Later, I found out that Brennan's description was the first to go out over the police radio. I also learned that during the procession of Kennedy's motorcade, *News* employee Sally Holt had focused her camera at the back of the limousine, directly toward the TSBD at just about the time the car slowed to make the turn onto Elm. After it was determined that the shots had originated from the TSBD, she ran back to the *News*, where in her haste to unload the film, she exposed the roll. This *might* have been the only photograph taken that would have shown the assassin in the window; no other such photograph has ever surfaced.)

I interviewed at least 10—maybe 12—people until my envelopes were covered with notes. Oddly enough, all but Brennan said that there were definitely three shots. Brennan, the sole eyewitness, recalled only two.

A few minutes later, I strayed back to the front of the TSBD building, where I saw several *Times Herald* reporters huddled in a tight circle. I don't recall all of them, but John Schoellkopf and Paul Rosenfield were there. I tried to inch in to see what they knew. Schoellkopf pushed me aside and told me to go away. They were planning their coverage and didn't want the competition listening in. I got angry at Schoellkopf and was about to push him back. Rosenfield calmed the situation. I left. I saw four women from the *News*' women's department (as it was called then) and talked to them briefly. They agreed that the shots had come from their left—the direction of the TSBD. Later, one of them would incorrectly state that she had heard shots from over her *right* shoulder—a remark she quickly corrected. (Conspiracy theorist Mark Lane used that misstatement to "prove" his "grassy knoll" theory years after she explained to him that she had erred in the chaos of the moment.

Jim Ewell, a *News* reporter, had arrived at the TSBD; we talked about what we should do from there. Rumors were circulating that the president was dead and that LBJ had been badly injured.

One woman swore to me that she had seen Johnson slump over in the car. Later, we

learned that Secret Service Agent Rufus Youngblood had tossed the vice president onto the floorboard and had covered him with his body. LBJ suffered a sore shoulder, but no serious injury.

Vic Robertson and another WFAA-TV newsman arrived shortly, and we all milled around—talking, interviewing, sticking close to radios. We wanted to watch the search in the TSBD and hear what was going on at Parkland Hospital at the same time. Soon the radio on a parked police cycle blared that a police officer had been shot in Oak Cliff. Then a policeman told Ewell that they thought they had the gunman trapped on the top floor or the roof of the TSBD.

The call about the shooting in Oak Cliff spelled conspiracy to me. It *has* to be connected, I told Robertson and Ewell. I suggested that Ewell stay at the TSBD (he knew the cops well after 10 years of police reporting; they weren't likely to tell *me* anything) and I would high-tail it to Oak Cliff where the policeman had been shot. Robertson and the other Channel 8 reporter said they had a WFAA news unit. We all left together.

Robertson and I hung out the windows, waving and shouting as the driver of the WFAA unit raced toward the scene of the officer's killing. We ran red lights and hit 90 mph; a couple of times we almost crashed at intersections. Five minutes later, we were on 10th Street, watching a distraught woman named Helen Markham describe how Officer J.D. Tippit had been gunned down. The ambulance had just removed Tippit's body. Several police cars, FBI agents and newsmen began to arrive. Two girls said they had seen the assailant run from the scene. A man said the gunman ran into an old house on Jefferson. Several of us ran to the house. It was a furniture storage facility; some rooms were stacked high with old furniture. Bill Alexander, an assistant district attorney, ran into the house with some cops. I ran after them. We could hear somebody running upstairs.

Nobody stopped me, so I inched my way into the old, cluttered house. A few seconds later, whoever was running upstairs gave an agonized shout as the floor gave way and he fell partially through the ceiling. I gave a terrified scream myself; I was standing right below. About that time, I realized that everybody in that building had a gun except me. I hurried outside to watch from a more sensible vantage point.

It soon became apparent that no one other than police were inside the house, so we drifted back out into the street. We heard a report on the police band that someone had sighted the gunman in the public library. Moments later, word came that it was a false alarm.

Meanwhile, police had scoured the TSBD and had found the assassin's rifle but no suspect. Many police were reassigned to search for Tippit's killer.

I have no idea who was with me at that point. As I moved westward on Jefferson, a man ran out of a used car lot and shouted, "I saw him. I saw him. He went that way. I tried to stop him, but he moved too fast for me." He pointed to an alley. Police stopped to get more information as I moved on.

A block or so up Jefferson, I saw an old woman, probably 75 or 80, sitting on a curb and sobbing quietly. She looked up at me, alarmed. "Do you live near here?" I ventured. "Do you know where I could use a telephone?"

Before she could answer, two police cars sped around the corner with an obvious destination in mind: the Texas Theater, which I could see up ahead. Eight or 10 people were milling around in front. Another dozen or so had arrived before I could get there.

"They're both inside," shouted a wiry man, pointing to the theater. "Both of 'em. I saw 'em as I was drivin' by."

A woman in her early 30s talked to several policemen. "He's inside. I don't think he bought a ticket. I don't remember what he looked like." The woman, later identified as Julia Postal, sold tickets at the Texas Theater. She said she had sold 23 tickets, but later we found no more than 15 or 16 persons inside.

As I ran inside the theater, my immediate thought was to run up to the balcony to get a better view of what was happening. But, frankly, I was afraid. The scare at the old furniture storage house had gotten my Adrenalin pumping, but it also had caused me to exercise some caution—if you can imagine a reporter chasing an assassin being cautious.

I decided not to go upstairs. I figured that if *I* were running from police, I would probably head for the balcony. I was also afraid to barge into the downstairs area.

I didn't know who was in there or if he was armed, but I was so wired that I had to see. I slinked rather cowardly over to the right aisle doors and peered in. Two cops almost ran over me. I plastered myself up against the wall.

The house lights had been turned up—not all the way, but they were considerably brighter than usual. The movie was still running. Four or five men were walking matter- of-factly up the aisle—two directly in front of me and two in the left aisle. There seemed to be additional movement as though another person or two were converging from the left. (Later, I found out that two men sitting close to the front had been shaken down.) Then, a man walking toward me (later identified as Officer N.M. McDonald) suddenly stopped, turned toward a man sitting five seats off the aisle and said "Get up" or "Get out."

McDonald moved quickly for a large man. So did the smaller guy, who jumped up and said something I couldn't hear and then threw his hands up in the air. Officer McDonald reached toward his waist to check, I assumed, for a gun. Seconds later, the suspect threw the officer a glancing blow with his left hand, then a solid hit with his right.

Everything after that happened so quickly that I couldn't tell what was going on. First, McDonald and the suspect went sprawling into the seats. A second later, at least three other officers—two from the row behind—jumped on McDonald and the suspect.

"He's got a gun," someone shouted. Two or three others yelled something else. One yelled, "We've got him," and another ran to join the fray. A policeman's hat was knocked off. Someone landed in one of the seats with a thud.

It was over as fast as it had begun. Three officers dragged the suspect out into the lobby. Other members of the press were there, including photographers. One of my more vivid memories is of a cop holding his hat in front of the suspect's face, apparently so that photographers couldn't get a shot of his face. The suspect was screaming, "I protest this police brutality," as they shoved him through the front door toward a waiting police car. One man preceded him into the back. Four others got in the car as it sped away.

At least 200 people had arrived by then, and many were chanting, "Kill the son of a bitch!" "Let us have him . . .We'll kill him!" One cop wiped tears from his face and ran around the corner toward the back of the theater. I felt like crying myself.

I called the city desk and told an editor that I had seen the capture and that a suspect was en route to the jail. Somehow, they already knew. I was told to interview whoever was left and then get back to the office. I don't remember how I got there—probably with another newsman—but I returned about 2:30 to begin typing my notes. The suspect, we were told, was a one-time Russian defector, Lee Harvey Oswald.

The newspaper was a madhouse. Some people reacted to the day's stress with dignity and professionalism; some didn't. Some openly wept as they exchanged views or talked to loved ones on the phones. Several members of the visiting press had returned from Parkland Hospital and were typing frantically. The *News*' reference department was already a shambles, with out-of-towners scooping up files on all the leading participants.

City Editor Johnny King personified grace under pressure. An old pro, King had become somewhat disenchanted with the routine of his job. But now he was superb, barking orders, sending his troops into battle, running back and forth to assist Managing Editor Jack Krueger and his assistants, Bill Russ and Tom Simmons, in planning the day's presentation.

By midafternoon, we had learned that police and FBI agents had confiscated the suspect's belongings from two different places: a house in Irving and a rooming house in Oak Cliff. We got the addresses. Someone sped off to Irving; I headed for the Oak Cliff address. Trouble was, Oswald's wallet had held *two* street numbers in Oak Cliff. I picked one on Neely Street. I was amazed that no police or other reporters were there. I could hear people talking inside. God, I thought, could I be lucky enough to find some people who knew the man?

I knocked. A radio was quickly shut off. I knocked again. No one opened the door. I kept rapping. Finally, a huge, scowling man clad in nothing but shorts two sizes too small opened the door. He spoke Spanish. Behind him, I saw a busty, nude woman on a rollaway couch struggling to cover herself.

"Do you know Lee Harvey Oswald?" I asked several times, backing up a step or two as the man continued to glare at me.

I had seen enough violence that day so I turned and said, "Sorry," and got out of there.

The second address, on Beckley, was more fruitful. I encountered an elderly woman, Earlene Roberts, who said, "They've just left. I told them everything." She obviously thought I was a cop. "I just want to make sure I know everything," I said.

"You wanna see his room?" she asked, as she stepped back inside. "It's right there—not much to it." Right off the living room was an 8-by-11-foot room, with crummy curtains, a bed and a small dresser. A banana peel lay in an otherwise empty wastebasket.

She told me that the man had registered under the name "O.H. Lee" and that he had only been there for a few days. Mrs. Roberts said she had been watching TV coverage of the president's assassination when her tenant had come running in. She said that he wasn't too friendly and that he had run back out a few moments later without answering her. "He was a weird one, a real weird one," she said.

She tried to tear out the page to give me the receipt on which he had signed "O.H. Lee." I figured that police would eventually want that handwriting, so I declined, thanked her and left.

I headed back to the office, where I wrote a few more inserts for the main story, then called home. My wife, Paula, was about three months pregnant, and I wanted to assure her that I was safe.

I finally left the newsroom at about 10:30.

Although I had lucked into some incredible leads that day, I wasn't assigned a story to work on over the weekend. The *News* had fine, established police reporters, court reporters and general-assignment reporters to handle every aspect of the story now.

Again, I felt left out. On Saturday, I stationed myself in front of the TV and watched the nation launch its "Hate Dallas" stance. I had an odd premonition about the plans to move Oswald from the Dallas City Jail to the Dallas County Jail.

I called Johnny King and volunteered my services. "You're the science editor," he said cajolingly, adding, "but if I need you, I'll call you."

November 24, 1963; Dallas, Texas.

I awoke very early. TV commentators announced that the move still hadn't been made. Oswald would be moved at 10 a.m. Live coverage was promised.

"I'm going down to the police station to watch," I told my wife. "Not unless I go with you," she said.

We sped downtown, parked a block away from the City Building and ran toward it on the Commerce Street side. I tried to enter the basement near an armored car parked half-in and half-out of the building. Paula was stopped. My press credentials were checked three times, but finally I eased down the ramp. Some 75 people were jammed in a semicircle around the doors that led to the police department.

I hadn't been there two minutes before I heard somebody shout, "Here they come!" The strobe lights went off, and a couple of dozen reporters inched toward the doors. Capt. Will Fritz and two of his homicide detectives walked out with a handcuffed Oswald. Two seconds after they were outside the doors, a blur leapt in front of the group. A shot rang out. "Oh my God," I thought, "*not again!*"

Several cops immediately jumped on the man holding the gun and wrestled him down. It seemed as if there were so many wrestling that there was no room for the gunman on the ground. He held his arm high—the gun still in it—as the mass struggled to get him under control. It was a full five minutes before I found out that Ruby was the killer.

Some officers pulled Oswald to a nearby holding area. An ambulance arrived. It must have been very close by. Thrown onto a stretcher, Oswald was hoisted into the ambulance, as reporters stared at each other in disbelief. Then almost as one, they bolted to telephones. I tried to get inside to see where the gunman had been taken, but the door had been shut off by cops.

A Kansas City reporter staying across the street at the Statler Hilton Hotel offered me a phone—after he finished. I told him that I needed to check on my wife, who was *somewhere* outside.

I found Paula out in front, and we drove home to drop her off. I had to get back to the *News* to report what had happened. I was excited about seeing the picture that *News* photographer Jack Beers had taken. Beers, an old pro, had been standing to Oswald's left as he was escorted through the basement doors. I knew that Beers must have taken a great picture at just about the time the gunman shot. (As it turned out, Beers' photo ran a full front page the next morning. The *News* thought it would be a sure-fire Pulitzer Prize winner, until Bob Jackson developed *his* film over at the *Times Herald*. Jackson's photo showed Oswald being hit by the bullet; Beers' photo was taken about a second before that. Jackson won the Pulitzer.)

WITHIN HOURS, Eva Grant, Jack Ruby's sister, had hired Tom Howard as Ruby's lawyer. She came down to visit Ruby in jail and went across the street to Howard's law office. She talked briefly with me and a couple of other reporters, but she offered nothing substantive.

Accompanying Mrs. Grant was Tony Zoppi, the *News*' entertainment writer, who was as close as any newsman to being a friend of Ruby's. Zoppi, now the public relations director at the Dallas Fairmont, was of no help. I followed them into Howard's office, anyway.

Howard, Zoppi and Grant were soon ensconced in a front office, making phone calls. They called Ruby's brothers and sisters in St. Louis, Chicago and Detroit; they tried to get in touch with superlawyers Percy Foreman in Houston and Jack Erlich in Los Angeles. I slipped into a back office and gingerly lifted up the phone to eavesdrop as they dialed each call. As they searched for Foreman, I began sneezing and had to hang up. I never learned the contents of that conversation.

It was almost midnight when I finally got home. If Friday's events at the *News* had been traumatic, the scene on Sunday night was even more bizarre. The unthinkable had happened . . .and then happened again.

I still wasn't ready to go back to science writing on Monday morning. My best buddy, *News* columnist Larry Grove, and I decided over coffee that since no one knew how Oswald had gotten from the sixth floor of the TSBD to the Texas Theater in Oak Cliff, somebody needed to dig up information on that. King was kind enough to let Grove and me loose to work together on that story. Five days later, before the Warren Commission was even named, we had an exclusive story on Oswald's comings and goings, the time sequence of events and a list of the people Oswald had encountered along the way.

I guess I forced myself into the fore. No longer was I shut out of the big story. I later covered the Ruby murder trial, wrote exclusively about Oswald's Russian diary, was the first print journalist to interview Marina Oswald and was the only reporter inside at Ruby's funeral.

For years I was called upon to respond to the myriad conspiracy theorists who dropped their offerings on an uninformed (or misinformed) public. When New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison revved up his Clay Shaw conspiracy case, I spent nearly two years covering every aspect of it for *Newsweek*.

The entire experience entailed a lot of work, intrigue and pressure. For a newsman—and for a lot of citizens—the weekend of November 22 through 24, 1963, was unforgettable. Believe me, at times I've tried. ■

DMN 1-17-84

Oswald's daughters receive $34,000 in Enquirer suit

By Robin Stringfellow
Staff Writer of The News

The daughters of Lee Harvey Oswald have reached a $34,000 out-of-court settlement with the *National Enquirer* in a suit they filed in 1982 that claimed the tabloid portrayed them as "social outcasts," sources close to the case said Monday.

The daughters — June, a 22-year-old creative writing student at Harvard University, and Rachel, a 20-year-old fashion merchandising student at the University of Texas at Austin — filed the suit after the tabloid published a story titled "Nightmare Life of Terror Stalks Lee Harvey Oswald's Daughters."

The story, based on statements by a woman described as a close family friend, said the daughters were haunted by the memory of their father's role in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and were shunned by classmates while growing up in Rockwall, 25 miles east of Dallas.

The story also said that the girls' dogs had been poisoned.

In court papers, the daughters charged that the story was false and that they felt "stigmatized" when it appeared on grocery store checkstands. They also maintained that they never met Joy Smith of Mansfield, the woman quoted in the story as a close friend.

The girls' mother, Marina Oswald Porter of Rockwall, and attorneys for both sides declined to comment on the case Monday, citing a confidentiality clause in the settlement.

Attorneys for the *National Enquirer* contended in court papers that Oswald's daughters were made public figures by the assassination.

They said June Oswald's decision to write a first-person account of her life for *People* last November was evidence that the daughters were "not inclined to shun publicity."

FWST 11-18-83

UT acquires JFK collection

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The Barker History Center at the University of Texas said Thursday that it has acquired a 1,700-piece collection of items connected with the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Don Carleton, director of the center, said the collection came from Earl C. Kubicek, a private collector from Santa Fe, N.M., who began the collection on the day of the Dallas shooting.

Carleton said the collection contains books, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets tracing aspects of the assassination from the initial news coverage to its impact on society. It contains numerous foreign publications.

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS 11-25-63

R. Kennedy Loses Clout, Says Hoffa

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)— The assassination of President John F. Kennedy made U.S. Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy "just another lawyer," James H. Hoffa says.

The Teamsters Union president, one of Robert Kennedy's bitterest foes, declared:

"He's not going to be able to guarantee patronage, or advancement to the Court of Appeals, or Supreme Court because the passing of our President by assassination makes him just another lawyer. He is not going to be able to promise, as he has so many times, promotions if he could secure convictions . . ."

Hoffa, here to address a union rally, has repeatedly blamed his legal troubles on a "personal vendetta" against him by Robert Kennedy.

BRIEFS....Dr. Linda Norton's report on the exhumation of LHO is in the January issue of the Journal of Forensic Sciences; Norton, who says LHO was shot in the "Dallas County Jail," also mentions the craniotomy cut, but the published photos do not show it - more next issue, which will be out in mid-March or April....A bizarre 20th anniversary performance was turned in by Larry Flynt: he arranged for some firecrackers to be set off in Dealey Plaza as he was driven down Elm, but nothing happened; on a later try, Flynt smeared ketchup on his face and shouted "Take me to Parkland, I want an autopsy"; in planning for a news conference, which never happened, he even offered $1000 for a copy of the Canfield-Weberman book! It was all probably publicity for his new magazine, The Rebel, which is devoted to conspiracies and all the stuff in Mae Brussell's newsletters; at a cost of $2.95 per week, The Rebel should be a good tax shelter....The Mel McIntire photos in the last newsletter may soon be available to researchers - watch this space....The CIA missed several deadlines in responding to FOI suits from Gary Shaw and Bud Fensterwald, and had the gall to ask for extensions - many FOI actions have been slowed while the Raygunites try to circumvent the Constitution.

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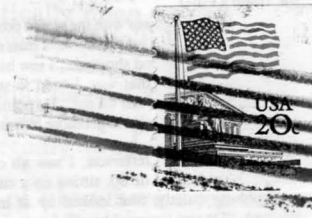

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